

**THE REAL SECRET OF
FREEMASONRY**
MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER

For the past several centuries, Masonry has been under attack from one quarter or another. The intensity has varied as have the causes but it appears that as we begin the 21st Century we will have to confront the attacker.

The old and ignorant allusions are the same but they have been exacerbated by a far more sophisticated communications network than in the past. The television and internet are powerful forces in our world today.

Traditionally we have responded to our critics by taking the position that "silence is golden" but the blatant falsehoods circulated by our current adversaries have forced us to speak out on behalf of our beloved Fraternity.

The word of Masonry is vast, complex and rich, but it is as nothing compared to the immense sweep and scope of thought, faith, history and culture contained in the word *Christianity*.

As many well known Christians and Masonic authors have stated, there can never be conflict between Christianity and any other organization which constantly urges its members to live a moral life.

The following are two often asked questions by those who are not members of Masonry and answers which hopefully will clear the misted veil which lies over the Craft.

Is Freemasonry a religion?

No. *Religion*, as the term is commonly used, implies several things: a plan of salvation or path by which one reaches the after-life; a theology which attempts to describe the nature of God; and the description of ways or practices by which a man or woman may seek to communicate with God.

Masonry does none of these things. We offer no plan of salvation. And while we open and close our meetings with prayer, and we teach that no man should ever begin any important undertaking without seeking the guidance of God, we never tell a man how he should pray or for what he should pray.

Instead, we tell him that he must find the answers to these great questions in his own faith, in his church or synagogue or other house of worship. We urge men not to neglect their spiritual development and to be faithful in the practice of their religion.

Masonry makes a simple religious demand on a man – he must believe that he has an immortal soul and he must believe in God. No atheist can be a Mason.

Is Freemasonry a "secret" society?

No. Freemasonry is a fraternity of men who are proud to be known as Masons, No. A secret society tried to hide the fact that it exists. Masonic Lodges are marked with signs, listed in the phone book and their meeting places and times are usually listed in the newspaper. Members identify themselves with pins and rings. The only secrets in Masonry relate to the ways we can recognize each other. The ritual of Masonry, the *Monitor*, is in print and anyone can read it. Interestingly, the anti-Masonic writers who condemn us for bring a secret society are always quoting from the *Monitor*. If it's a secret, it isn't a very well-kept one.

Every Mason stands equal among his brothers, regardless of walk of life, and none is turned away for financial need.

Freemasonry has been characterized as a fraternity devoted to high ideals and admirable benevolence. Community service and charitable work are, in fact, principle Masonic activities.

Easily the best-known is the world's largest single charitable institution, the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children and Burns Institutes, which are located throughout Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.

Masons are simply your neighbors, joined together in a fraternity which tries to help men become better men as it tries to help the world become a better place through its charities. It is, so to speak, a "support group" for men who are trying to practice ethics and morality in a world which does not always encourage those ideals.

Freemasonry's teachings are acceptable to all religions – upholding the values of faith in the secular world – an organization for thoughtful Christians – and all men of good will.